

Thanksgiving was a great morale booster with a visit by Admiral Lefever. MAJ Rants did a first rate of job of ensuring that we all got a meal to feast upon. There was turkey, prime-rib, and all the usual fixings to include about 4 types of pie. Everyone enjoyed a nice, relaxed evening for the first time since our deployment. We can't wait to see what we are going to have for our upcoming Christmas meal. The new kitchen and dinning buildings arrived and are all set up (they were used for Thanksgiving). The contractor running our Dinning Facility has even planted three small gardens in the area and strung up Christmas lights to make it less austere. We have integrated our cooks into the kitchen, along with 2 of the Aussie's cooks, and the food is picking up a more western flair, which a lot of the guys appreciate.

A lot of changes are going on here at Qasim; the Brits from the Royal Air Force's 27th Squadron are in the process of going home, and we bid them a very fond farewell. They are replaced by a detachment from the Australian Army's 5th Aviation Regiment. A great bunch to work with; who all share the sunny disposition of the Australians. This week we were able to send some of our Soldiers home from the mission. We thank them for their hard work and dedication to the mission. We have also managed to clear some extra space in the hangar in order to provide better living conditions, and are moving towards having 14 personnel to each tent, as opposed to the 20 that we have now. This alone should increase the quality of life. Our basketball team beat the Air Force last week. The Air Force team had been sold as the team to beat here in country; they had crushed the US Embassy team two weeks before. Our pick-up team challenged the Air Forces' claims and now we have earned the title. There is rumor of a rematch. We now have a month's experience with disaster relief; so, we can facilitate a relief operation for the Air Force's rematch.

Best Wishes,
COL Bob Johnson
Eagle 06